Iris Feng

The Ghost of Taste

**In *The Ghost of Taste*, the Edna O’ Brien informs the readers that food triggers forgotten and trapped memories and that the role of food in one’s life changes as he or she ages. O’ Brien delivers her message through personal experiences by using imagery, parallelism, simile, appeal to authority, and arrangement on opening and ending.**

**O’ Brien uses imagery to describe her memory of eating a biscuit. She “study the pictures, deliberate…wait…when a grown-up…open the lid and say ‘Have one’”. The innocent portrayal reveals the simple yet fun role of food when she is young. She uses parallelism to stress that “food was pleasure…reward…possibly love” and it symbolizes happiness. When she reaches 11, food becomes a more restricted object because it is the age of a “mused-upon state of vertigo”, which represents love through the periphrasis. Girls prevent eating in front of their loved ones to portray a good image. Religious intervention also becomes a factor of fasting which imposes a limitation to when she can eat. As she ages, O’ Brien exposes herself to a wider world where her experience affect the role of food. When she is sent to Cuba, she eats a pot of greengage jam topped with mold and uses simile to compare it to actual “compote”. Food according to the Cubans is a desiring necessity. The scarcity of food in the poor condition contrasts her childhood delightful image of food thus presents a shift in her view.**

**O’ Brien emphasizes that “touch has a memory, but taste has more so” as she quotes from Baudelaire. The taste of food is like “Mother and that first bite”, the idea that opens and concludes the passage. The unique first taste would never be the same, thus this taste brings back one’s memory. Like what O’Brien implies, the biscuit awakes her childish, joyful family time, while the greengage jam reminds her the people in need. She appeals to those with life experiences and persuade them to recapture the “flavors of childhood” trapped in memory through food.**